THEY TOLD US IT WAS JUST A MINOR POWER ISSUE, AND THAT THE MANAGEMENT WOULD HAVE IT FIXED SOON.

EXIT

THEY TOLD US TO CLEAN OUT THE FRIDGE OF ALL PERISHABLES, SINCE THE POWER MAY GO ON AND

OFF QUITE A BIT.

THEY TOLD US WE MAY NOT HAVE CONSISTENT POWER FOR AT LEAST

A WEEK, BUT TO JUST BE PATIENT.

THEY TOLD US
A LOT OF THINGS.

WE SPENT OUR TIME PAINTING NOVA'S SYMBOLS ON THE WALLS OF THE APARTMENT.

PREPARING FOR WHATEVER CAME NEXT.
BASICS
ACRYLIC

TURNS OUT, WE HAD A BIGGER PROBLEM.

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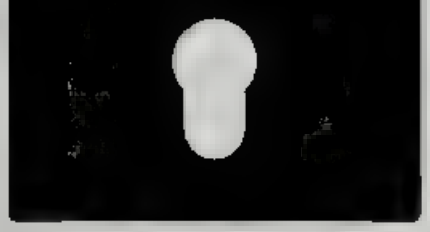
C  W
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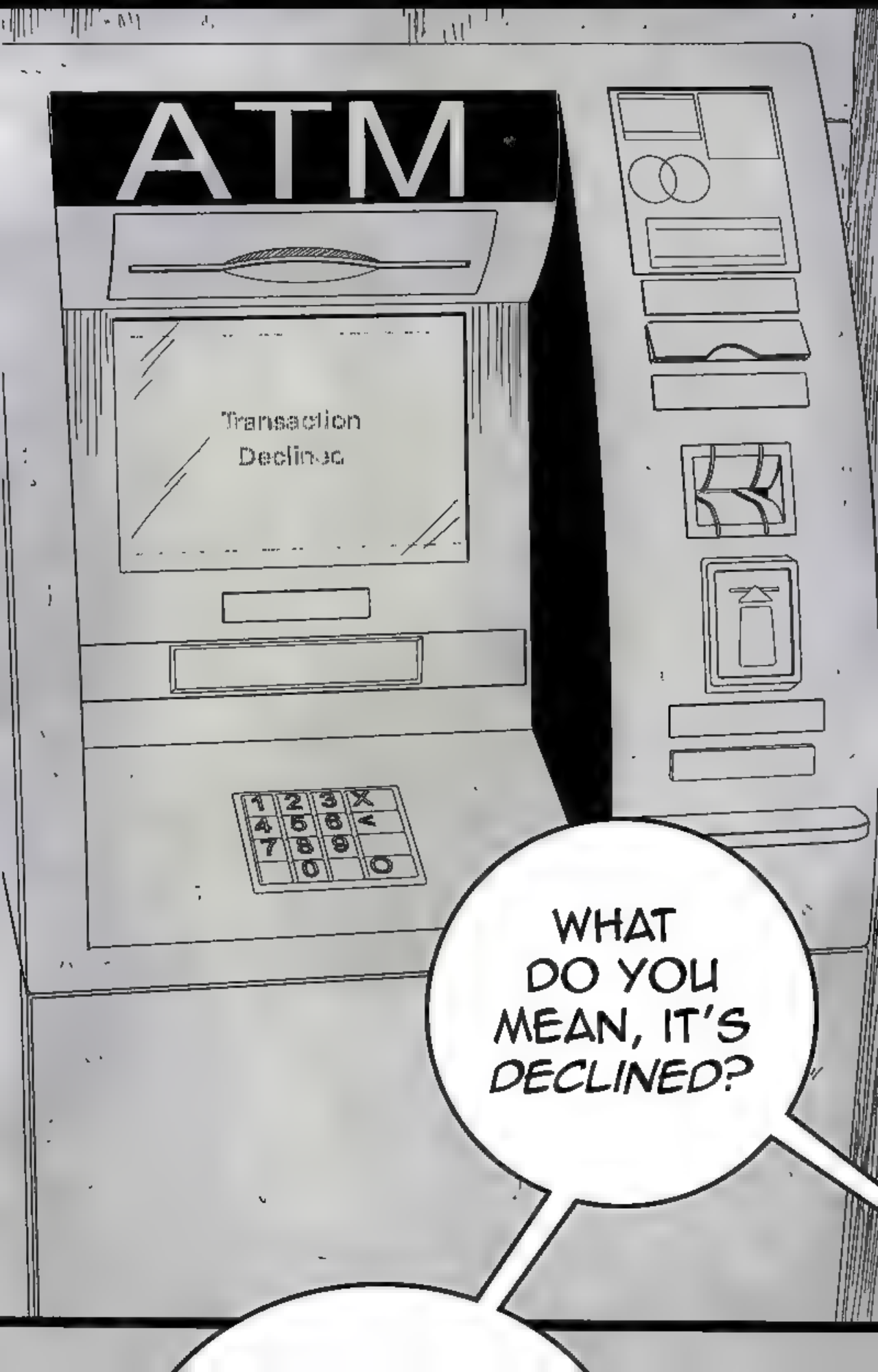
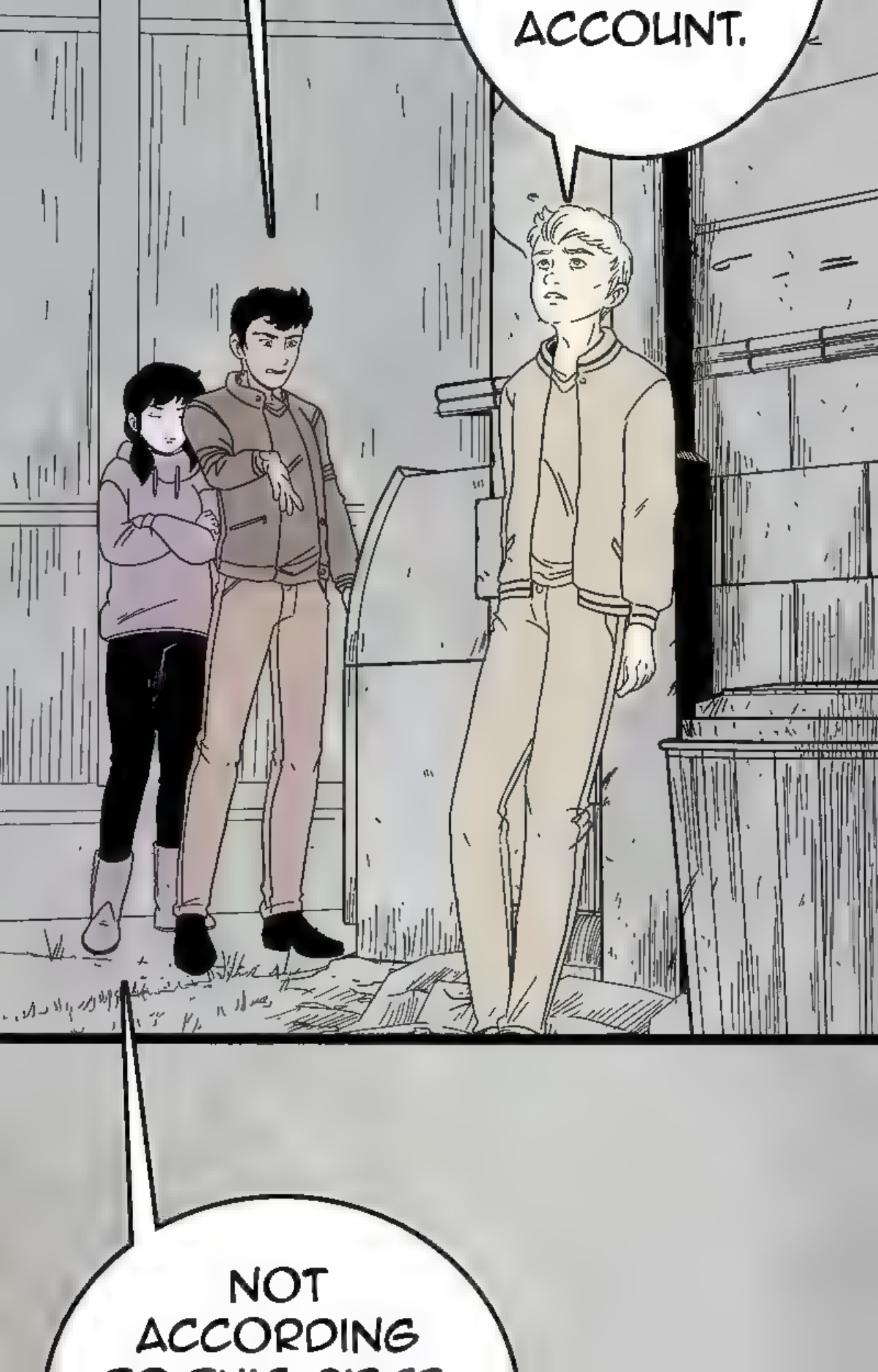
PART TWO


ATM
Transaction
Declined
1 2 3 X
4 5 6 ^
7 8 9
0 O
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, IT'S DECLINED?

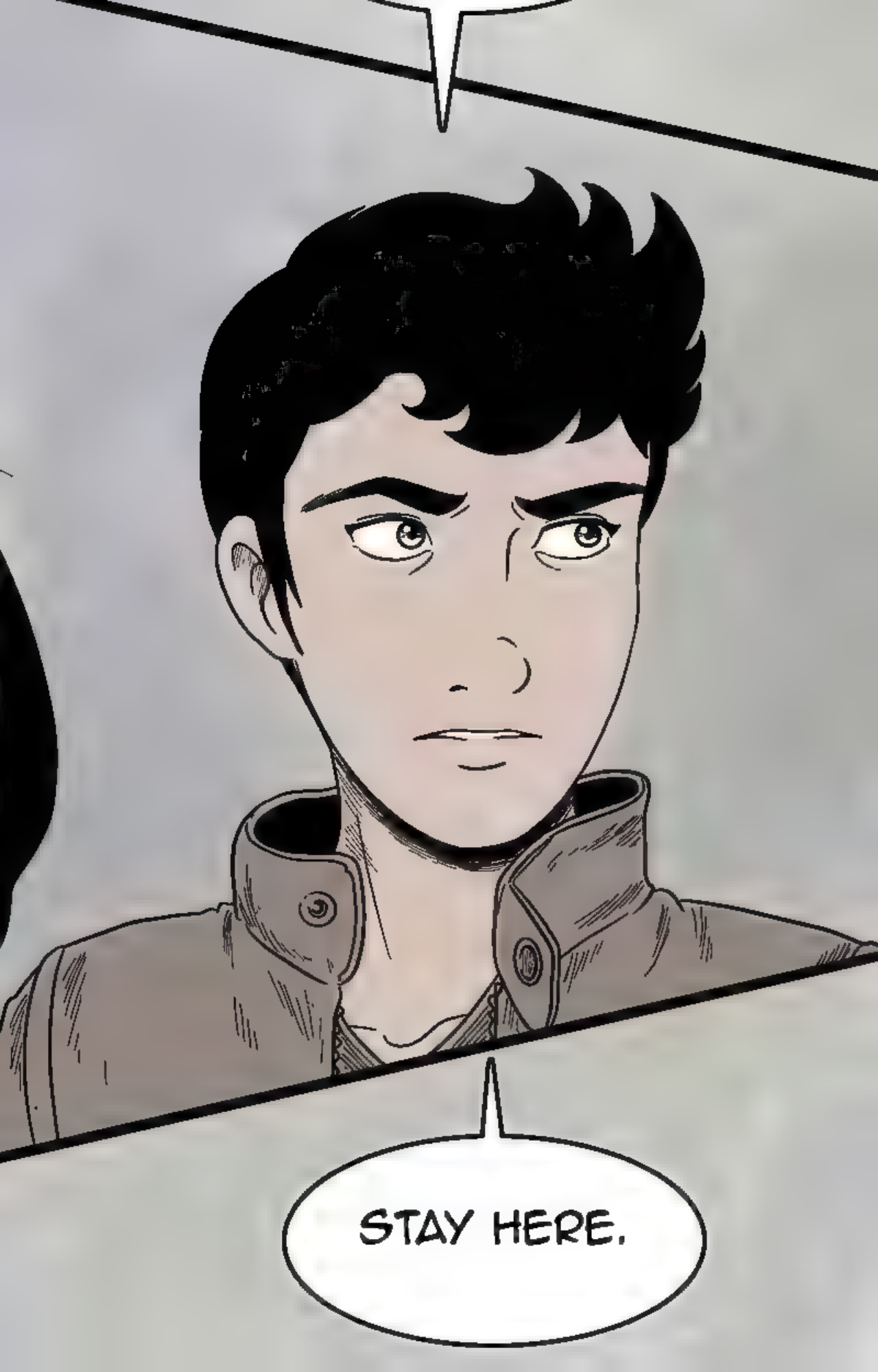
IS THE CARD BENT, OR SCRATCHED OR SOMETHING?
I DON'T KNOW! IT JUST SAYS "DECLINED"!
MAYBE J'S OUT OF MONEY.
THERE IS A *TON* OF MONEY IN THAT


ACCOUNT.
NOT ACCORDING

TO THIS PIECE OF JUNK, THERE ISN'T.

I DON'T GET IT. THE CARD WORKED FINE THE OTHER DAY...

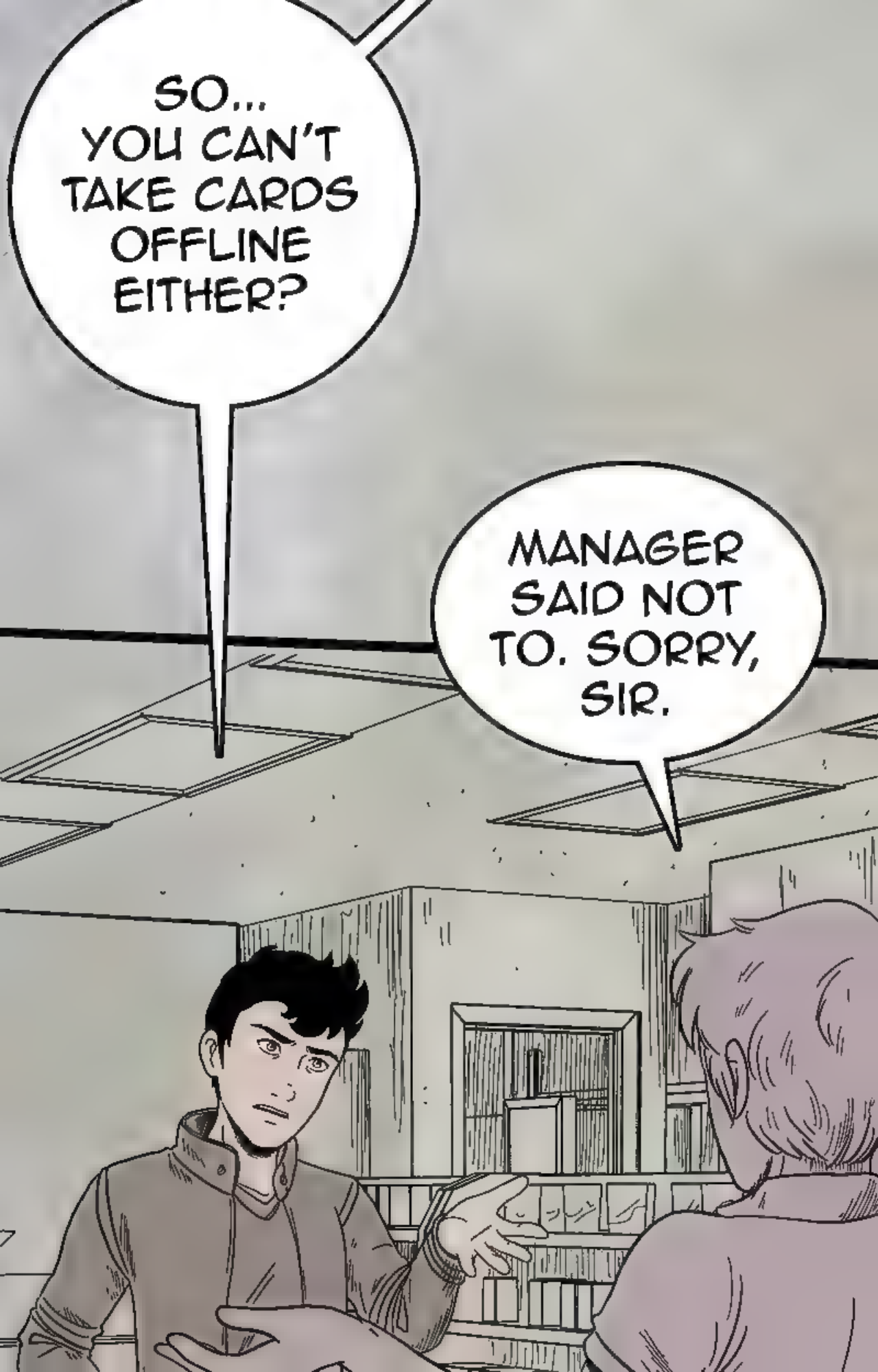
HANG ON. I'M GONNA GO TEST IT AT THE STORE.

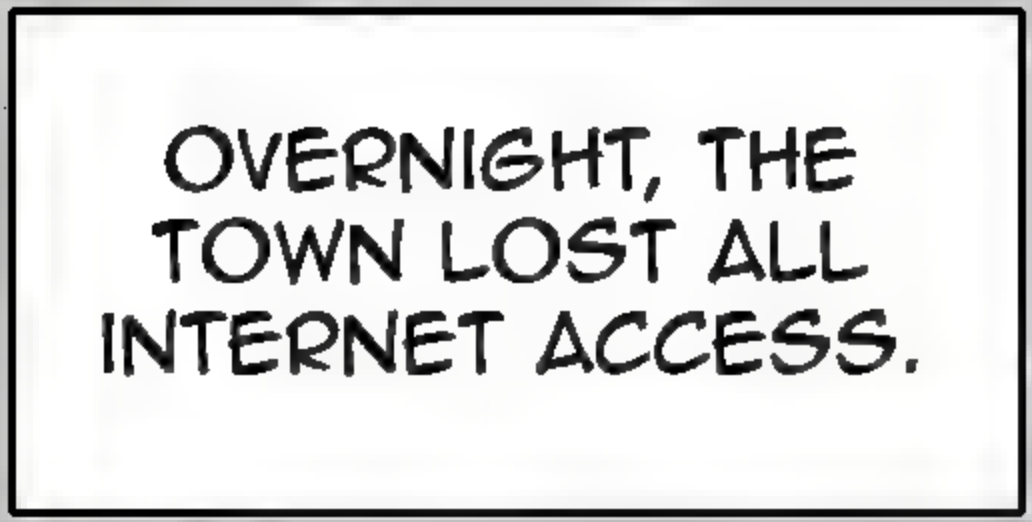

STAY HERE.

BUY ME A PRETZEL WHILE YOU'RE IN THERE!

NO, SORRY, WE CAN'T TAKE ANY CARDS.
WHAT? AT *ALL*? WHY NOT?

HUH? CUZ THE INTERNET'S OUT ALL OVER TOWN. DIDN'T YOU HEAR?
WHA- IT'S...

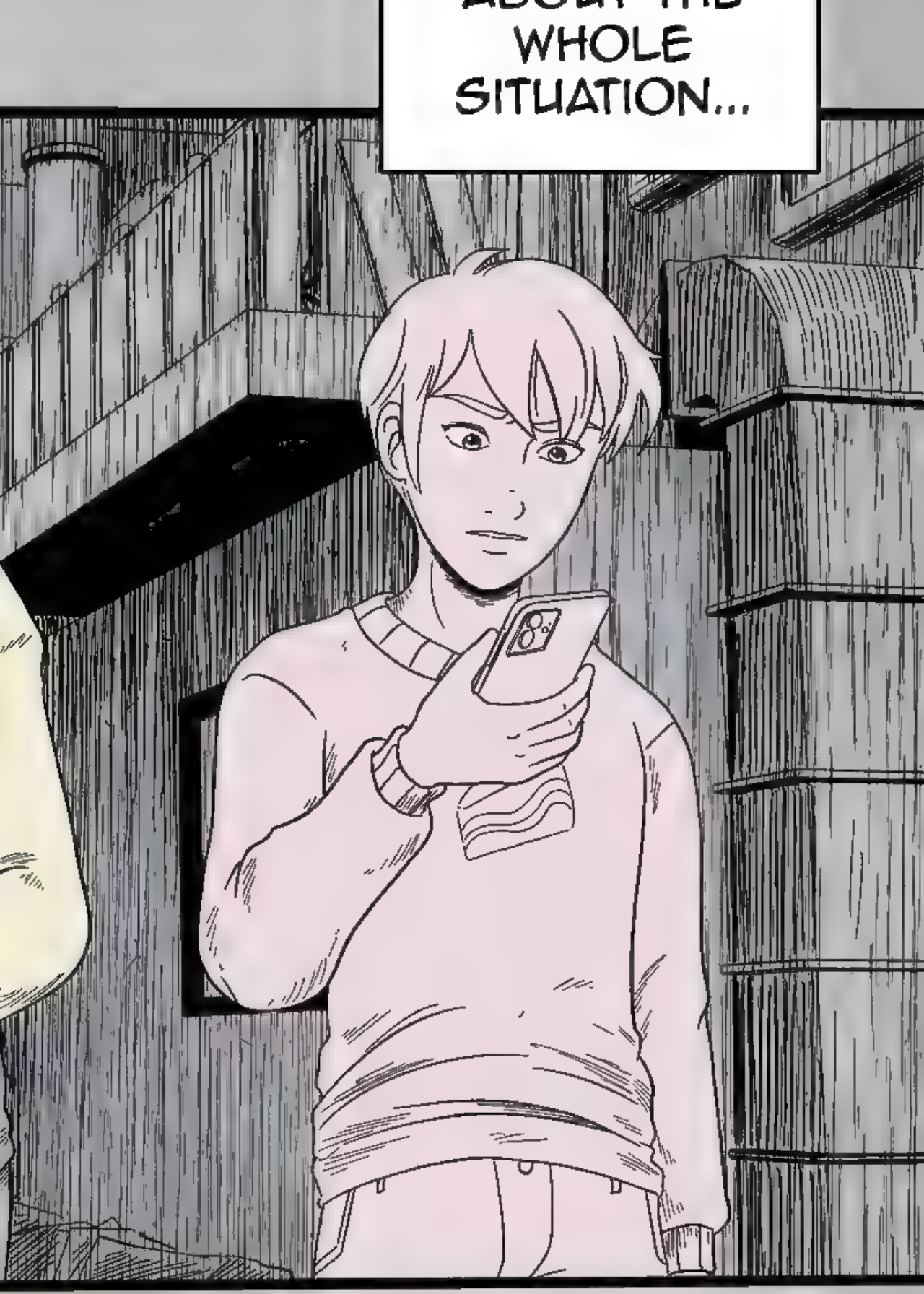

SO... YOU CAN'T TAKE CARDS OFFLINE EITHER?
MANAGER SAID NOT TO. SORRY, SIR.


OVERNIGHT, THE TOWN LOST ALL INTERNET ACCESS.

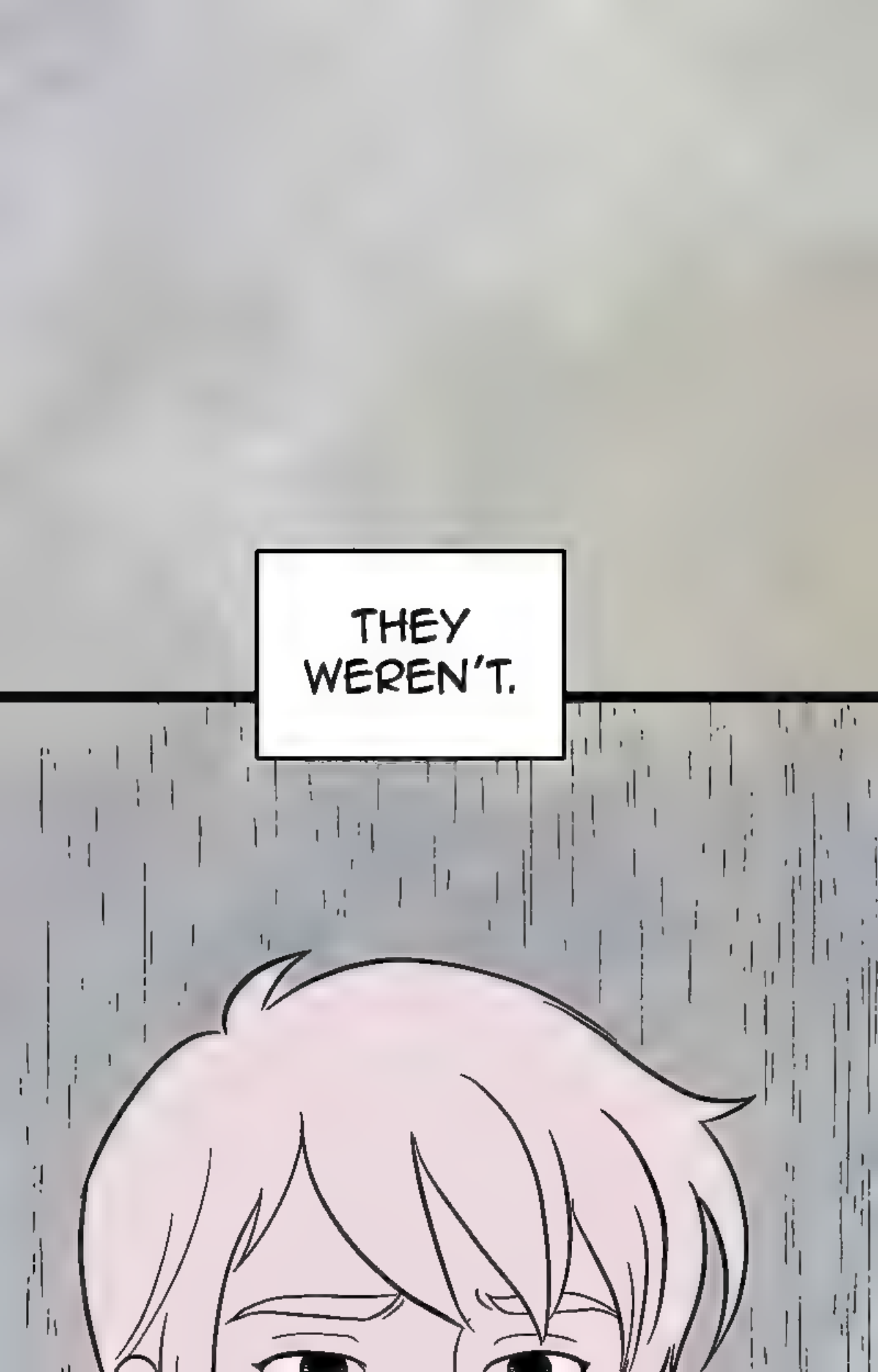
PHONES WERE ALSO HAVING TROUBLE GETTING SERVICE.
LANDLINES, MOBILE PHONES...

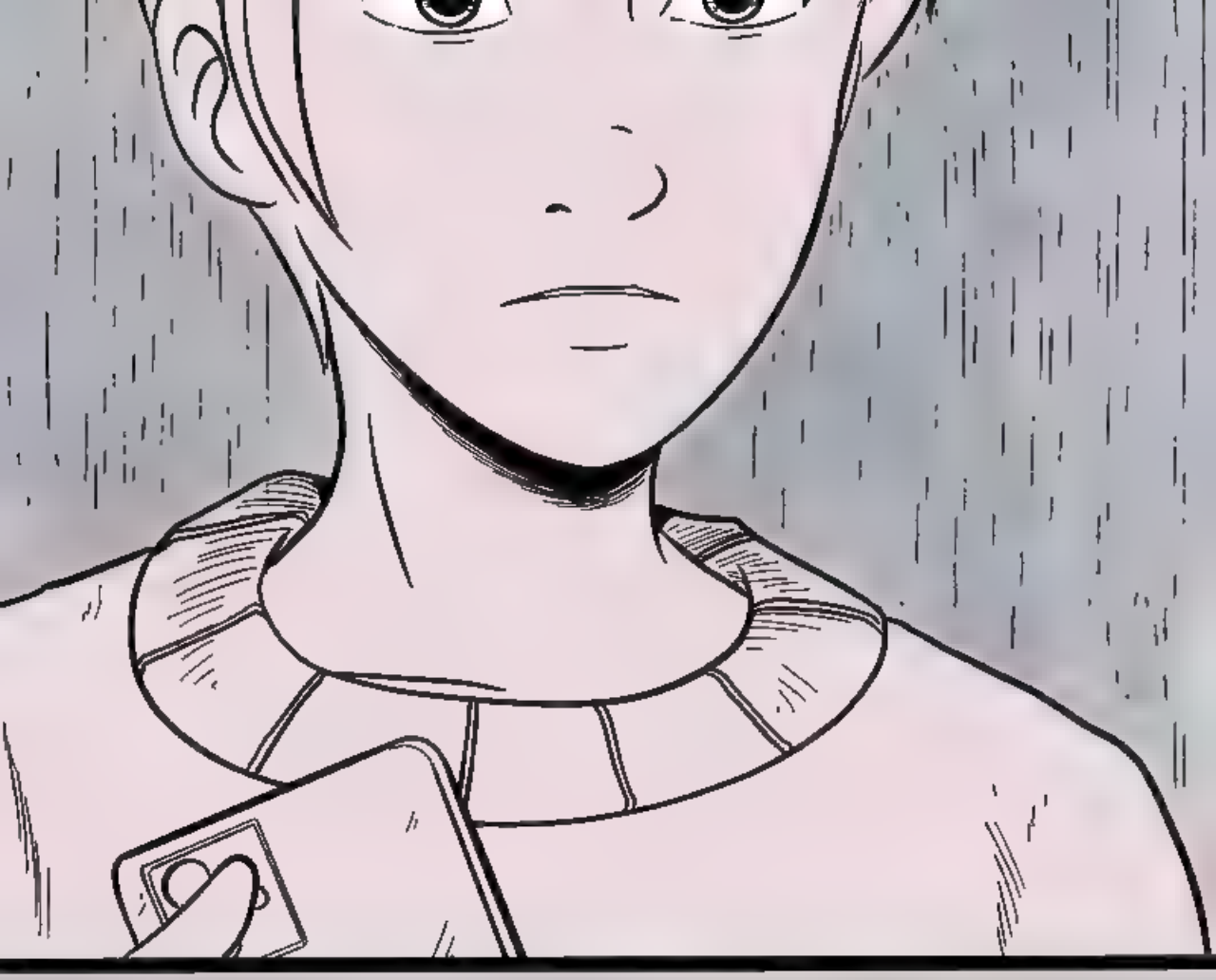
I WAS STARTING TO FEEL LIKE WE'D *REALLY* PISSED OFF THE ENTITY WITH THAT EMAIL STUNT.

PEOPLE SEEMED CONCERNED ABOUT THE


WHOLE
SITUATION...

AND THEN...


THEY WEREN'T.

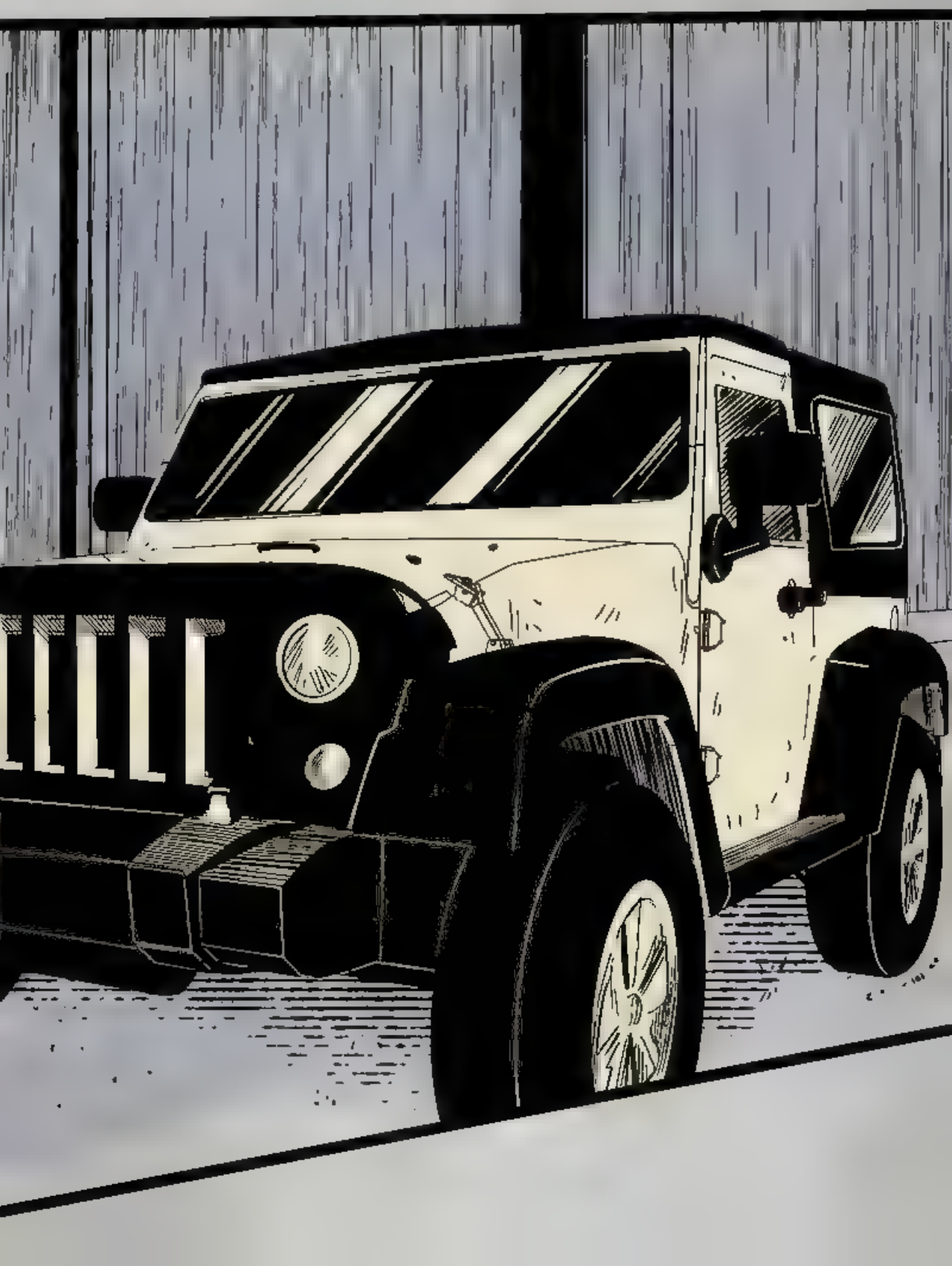


YOU COULD SEE IT HAPPEN, RIGHT THERE

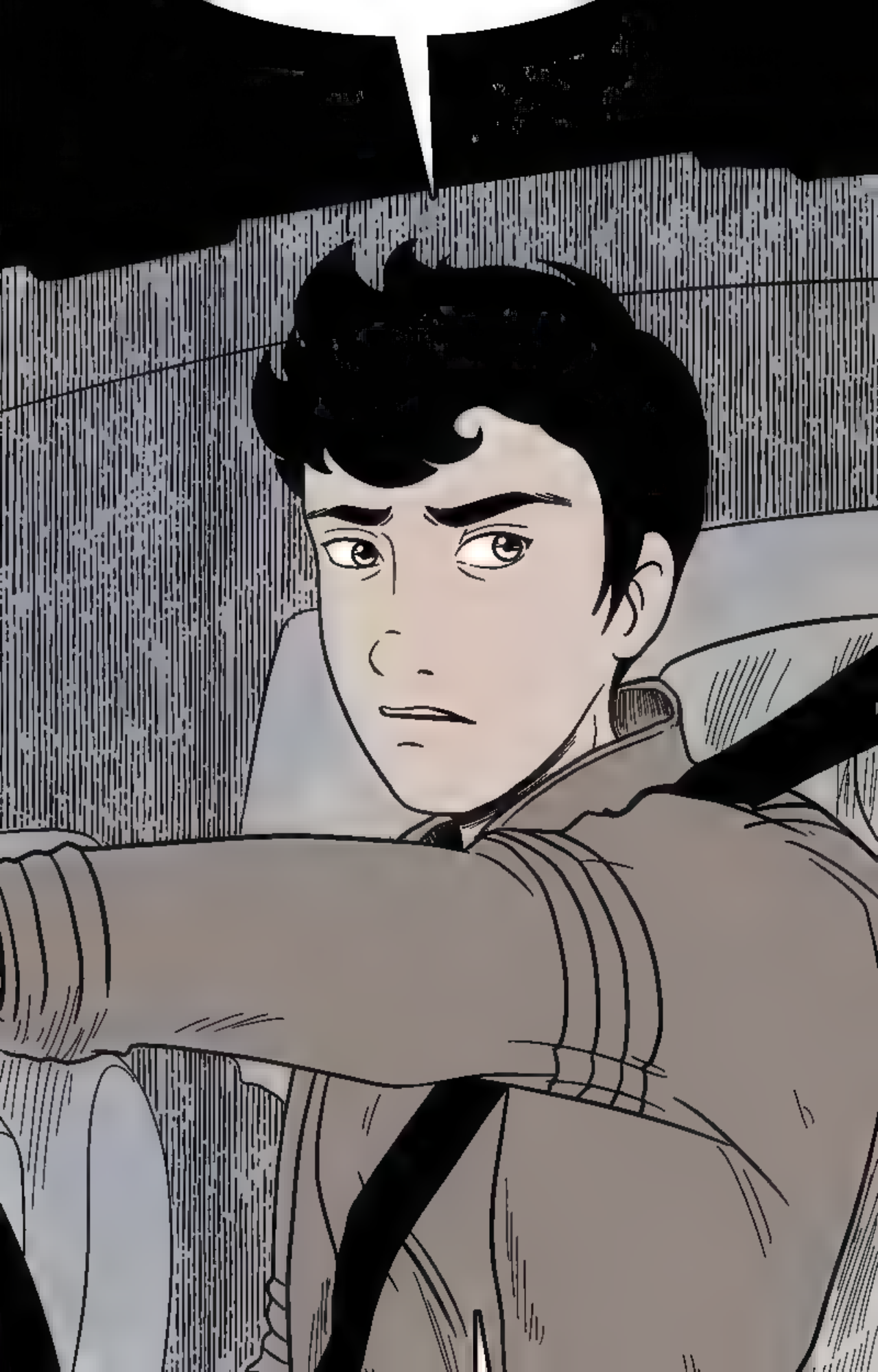
ON THE
STREET.

I GUESS THE ENTITY HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH OF US TRYING TO CONTACT THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

IT WAS WILLING TO PUT IN THE EXTRA EFFORT OF CONTROLLING EVERYONE IN TOWN...JUST TO MAKE SURE WE DIDN'T GET ANY MORE HELP.



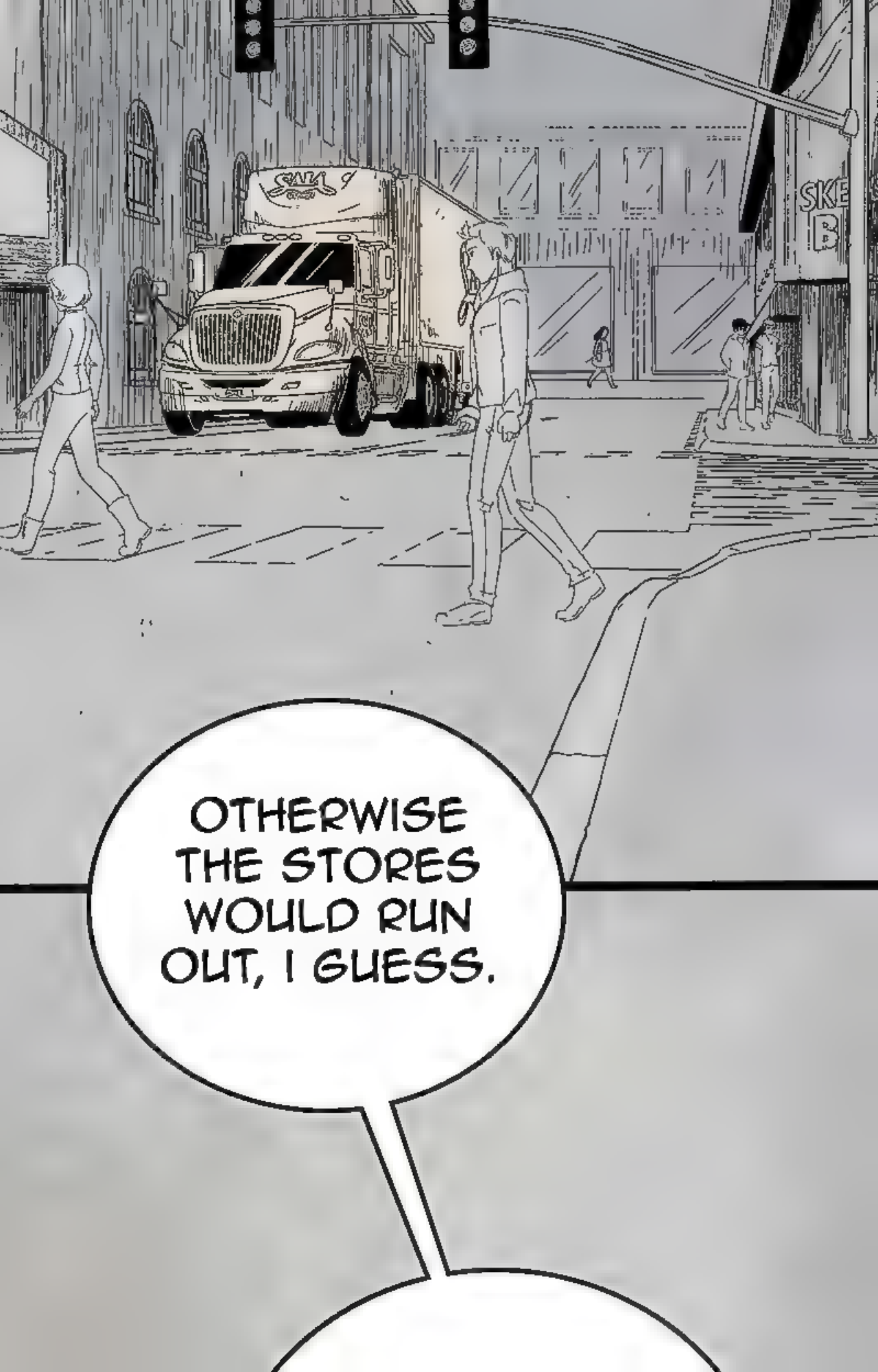
LOOK AT THEM.
POOR BASTARDS.
THEIR BRAINS HAVE TO BE SWISS CHEESE BY NOW.



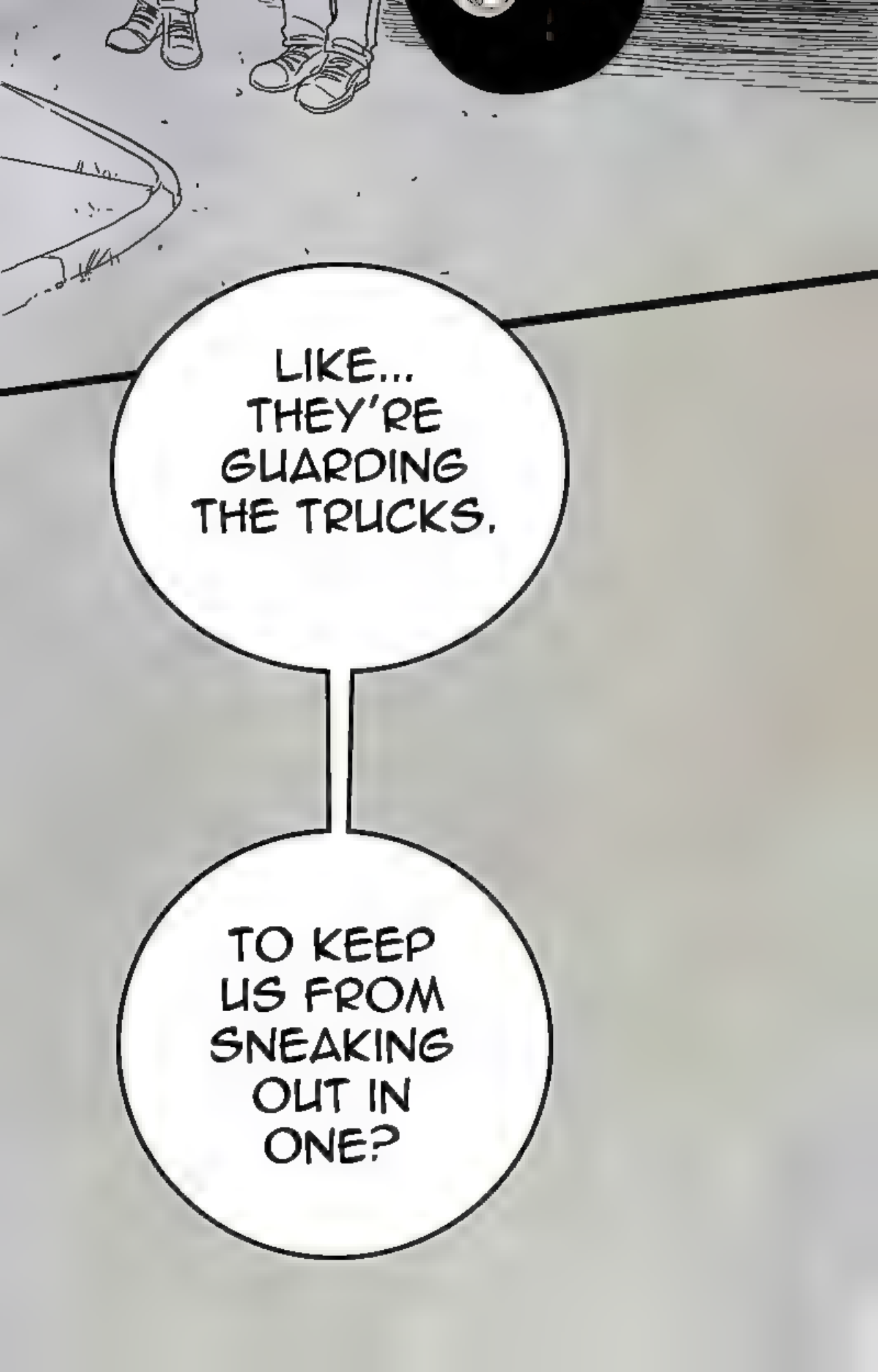
I WONDER HOW MANY TIMES YOU CAN WIPE A PERSON'S MEMORY, BEFORE THEY JUST STOP FUNCTIONING COMPLETELY.

WHY DOES IT EVEN KEEP THEM ALIVE AT ALL...

GUYS, LOOK...
DELIVERY TRUCKS ARE STILL COMING INTO TOWN.


OTHERWISE THE STORES WOULD RUN OUT, I GUESS.

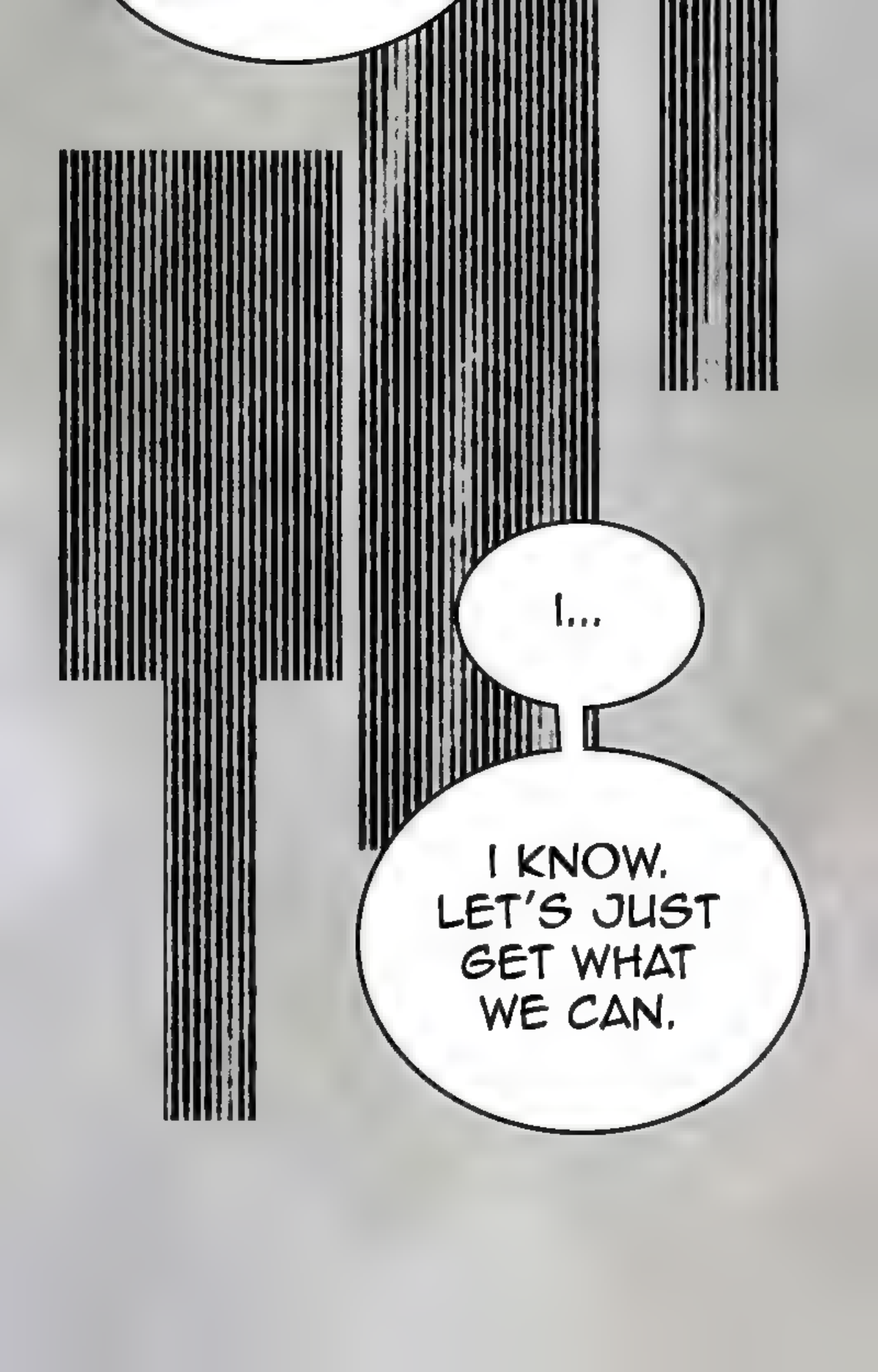
BUT THERE ARE ALWAYS SOME TOWN FOLK HANGING AROUND THEM.

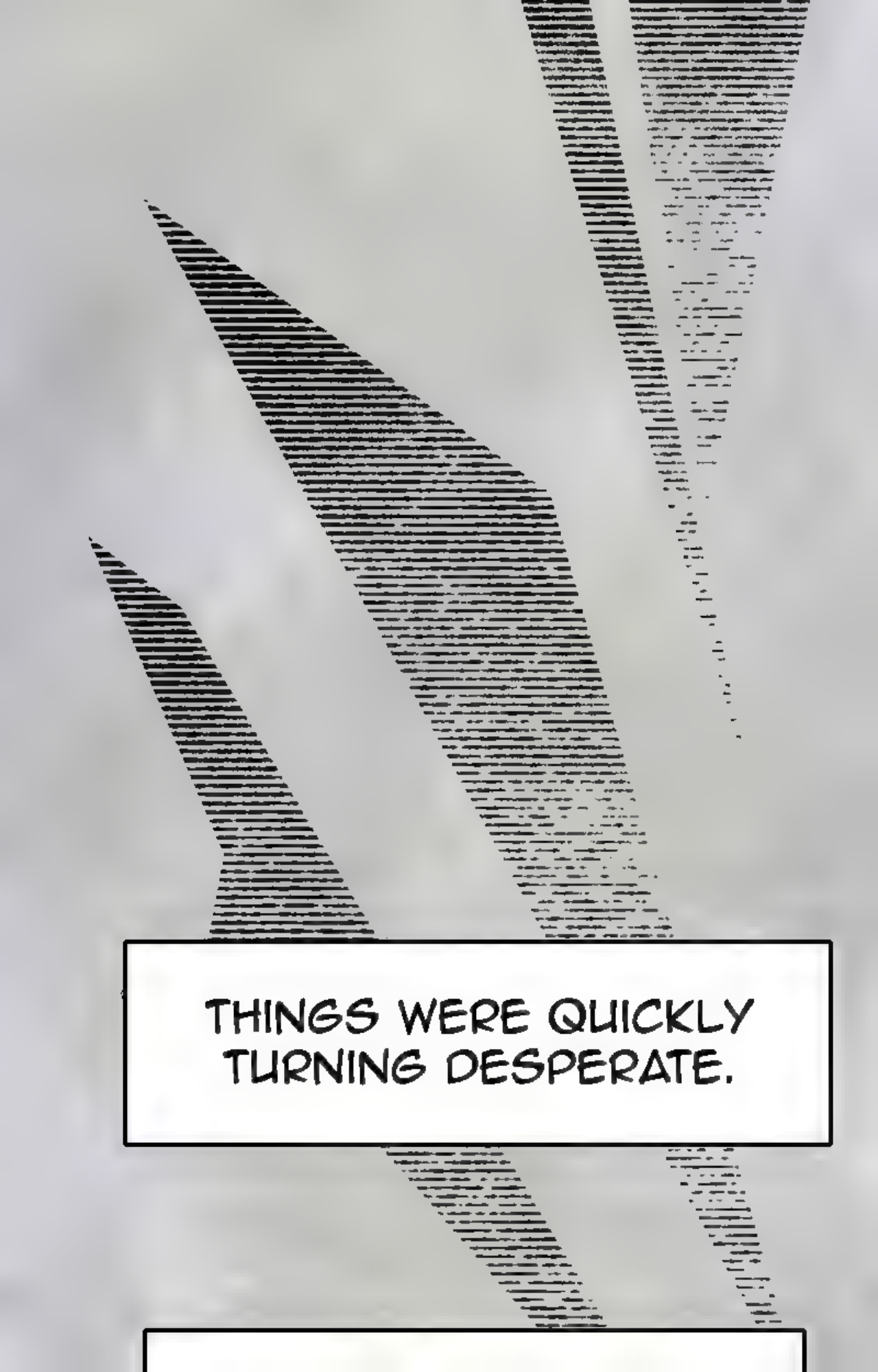

LIKE... THEY'RE GUARDING THE TRUCKS.
TO KEEP US FROM SNEAKING OUT IN ONE?

I TRIED THAT, MORE THAN ONCE.

NOT NEARLY AS EASY AS YOU MIGHT THINK.
I GOT CAUGHT EVERY TIME, AND JUST GAVE UP.
IT'S NOT WORTH IT, THEN.

LET'S JUST FINISH OUR SHOPPING AND GO HOME.
WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF CASH, FRANKIE...


I...
I KNOW. LET'S JUST GET WHAT WE CAN.


THINGS WERE QUICKLY TURNING DESPERATE.

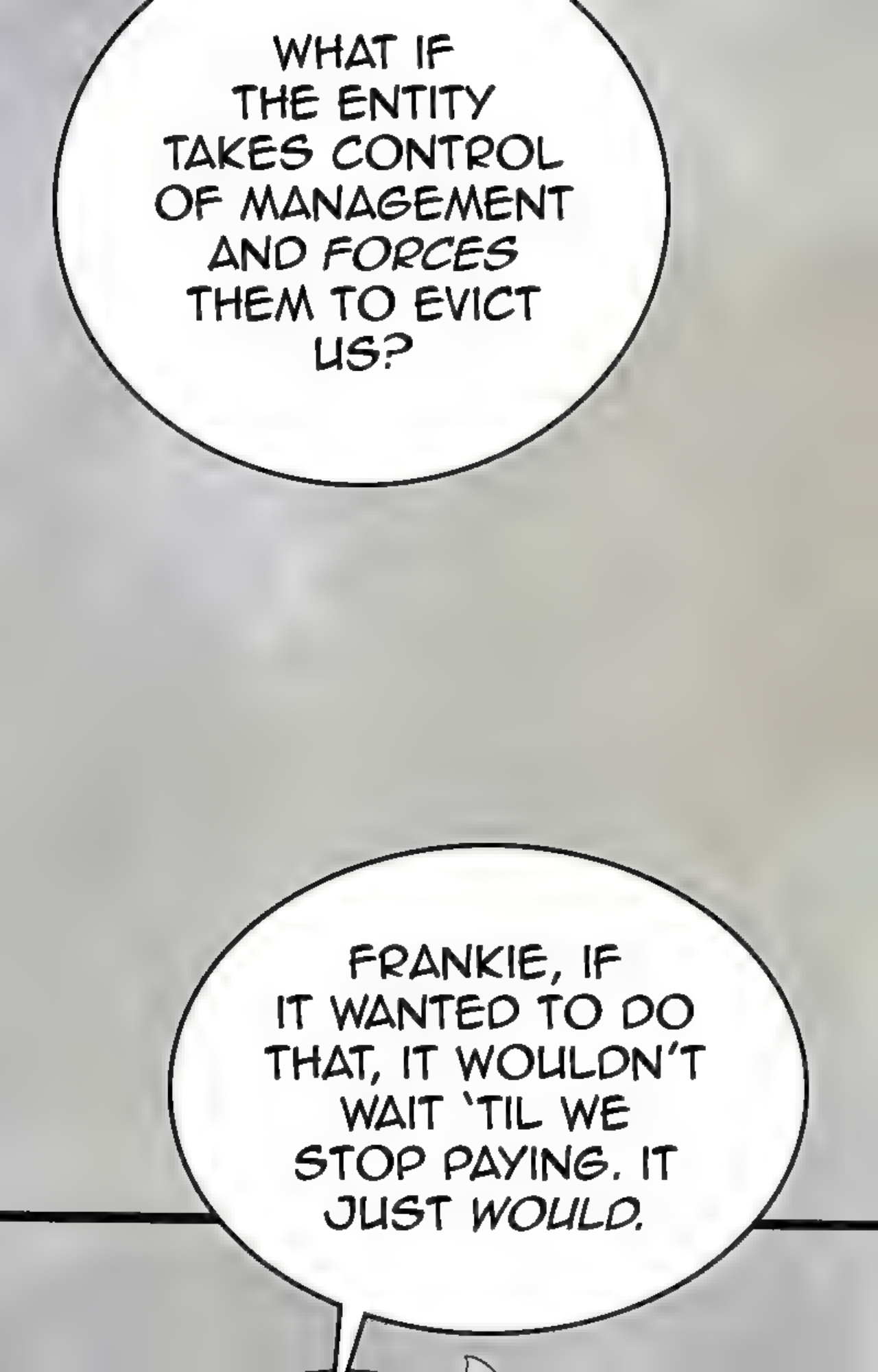
BOTH THE SITUATION,
AND US.

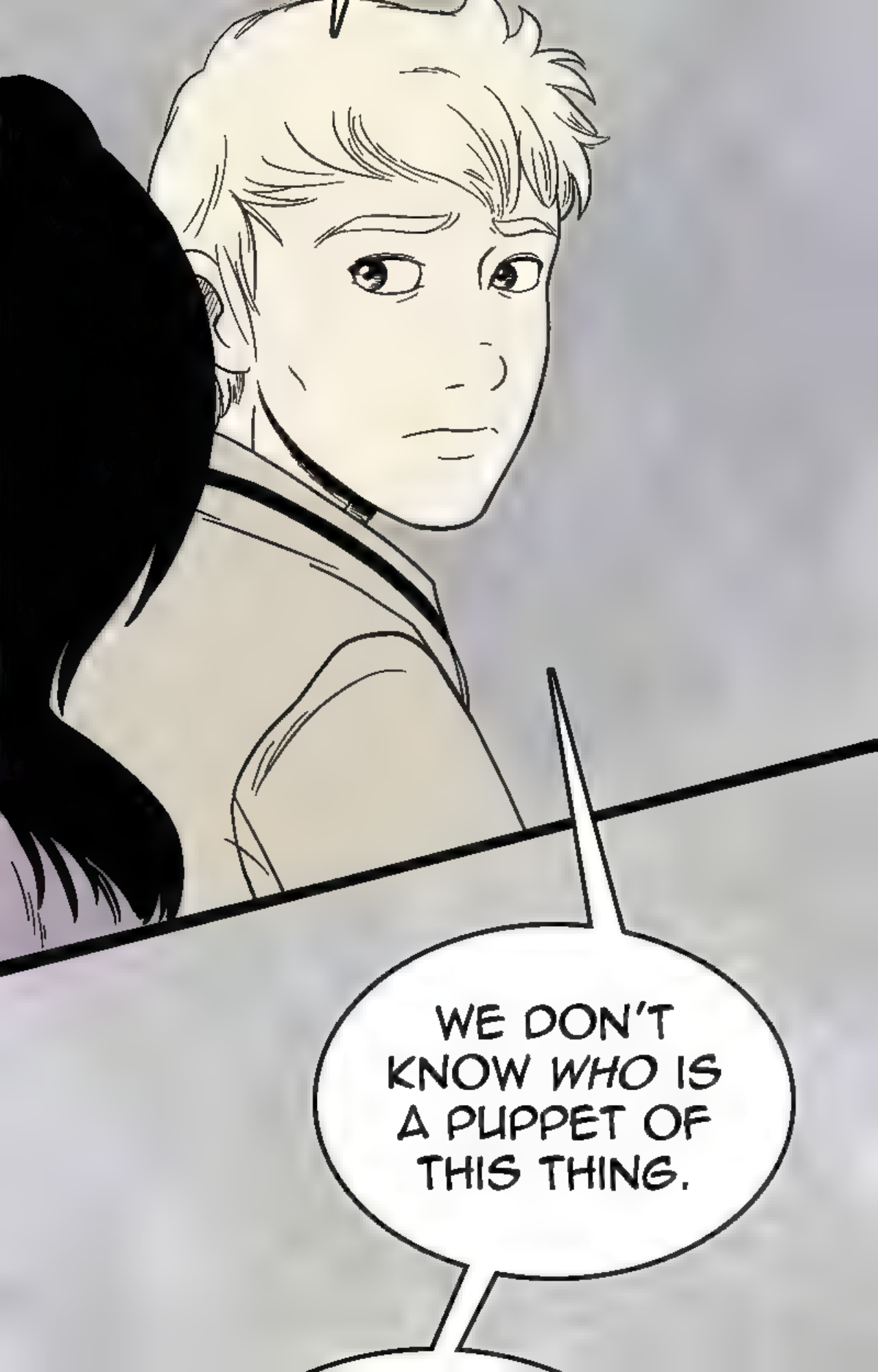
THEY CAN'T EVICT US RIGHT AWAY IF WE JUST STOP PAYING.

AND IF IT COMES TO IT, WE'LL JUST START STEALING FOOD.

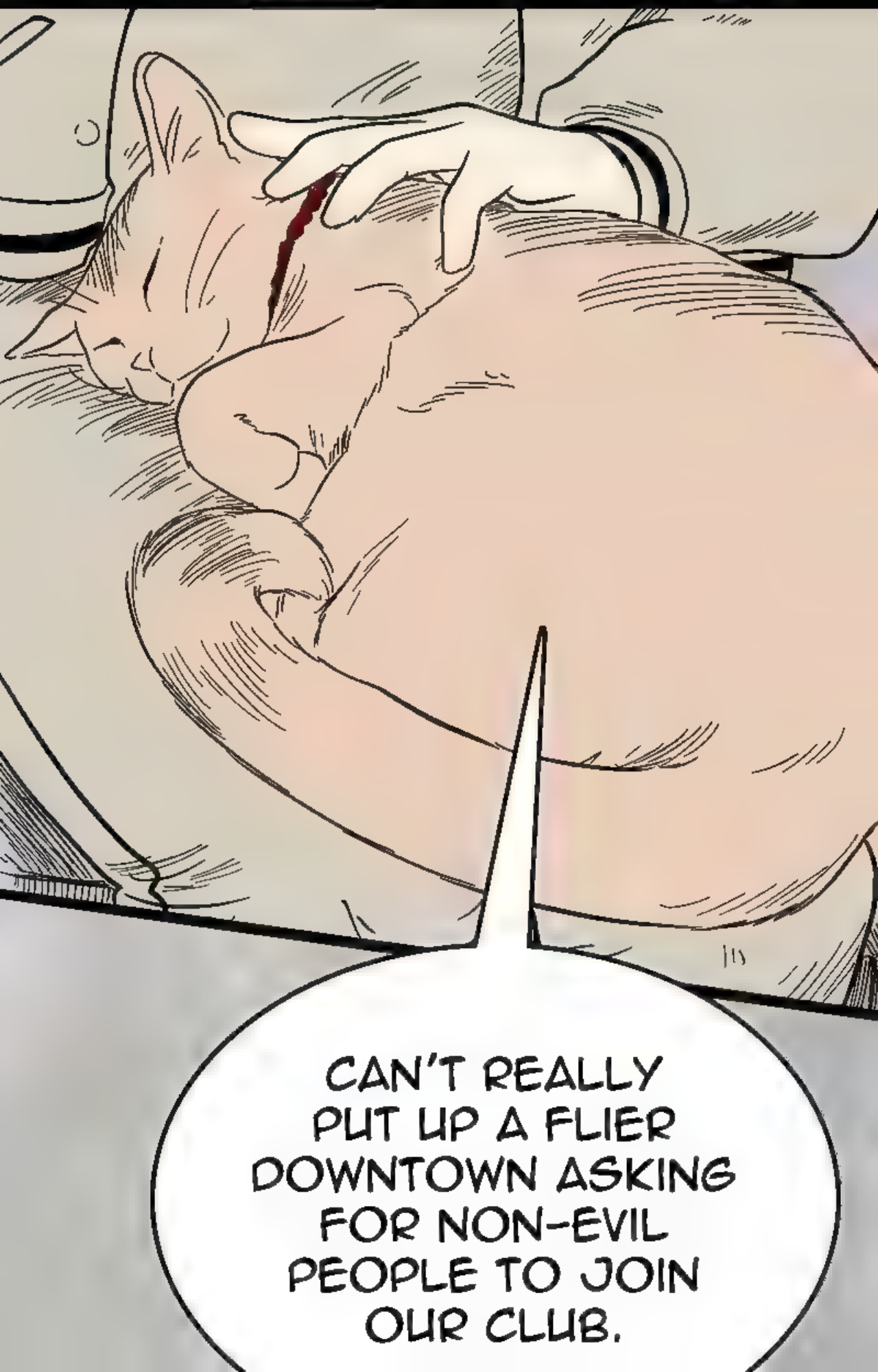
THAT'S IT.
FINE BY ME.

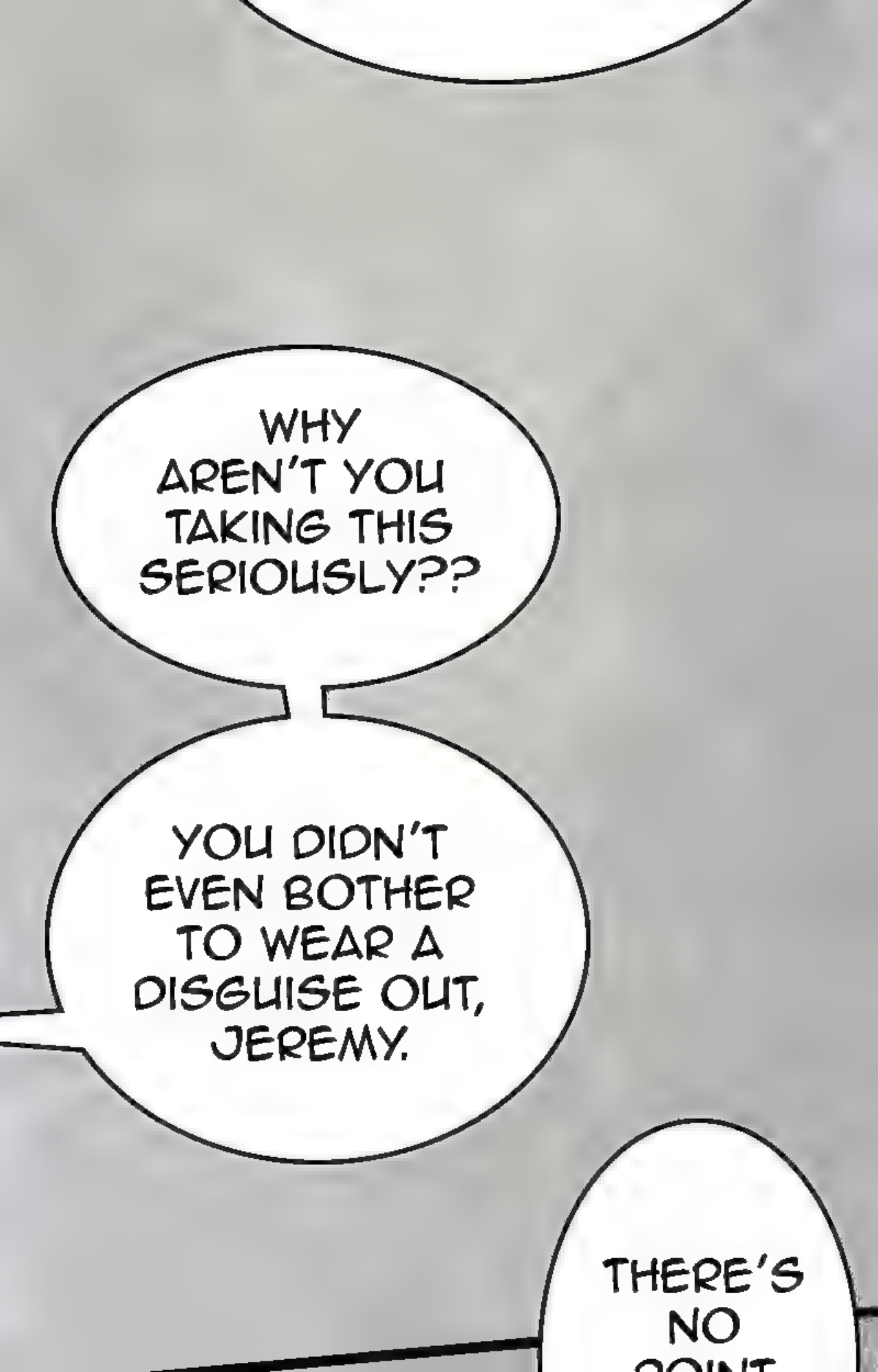
I...IF
WE JUST
STOP PAYING...


WHAT IF THE ENTITY TAKES CONTROL OF MANAGEMENT AND *FORCES* THEM TO EVICT US?
FRANKIE, IF IT WANTED TO DO THAT, IT WOULDN'T WAIT 'TIL WE STOP PAYING. IT JUST *WOULD.*


WE DON'T KNOW *WHO* IS A PUPPET OF THIS THING.

WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT WHO HAVE FREE WILL.


CAN'T REALLY PUT UP A FLIER DOWNTOWN ASKING FOR NON-EVIL PEOPLE TO JOIN OUR CLUB.

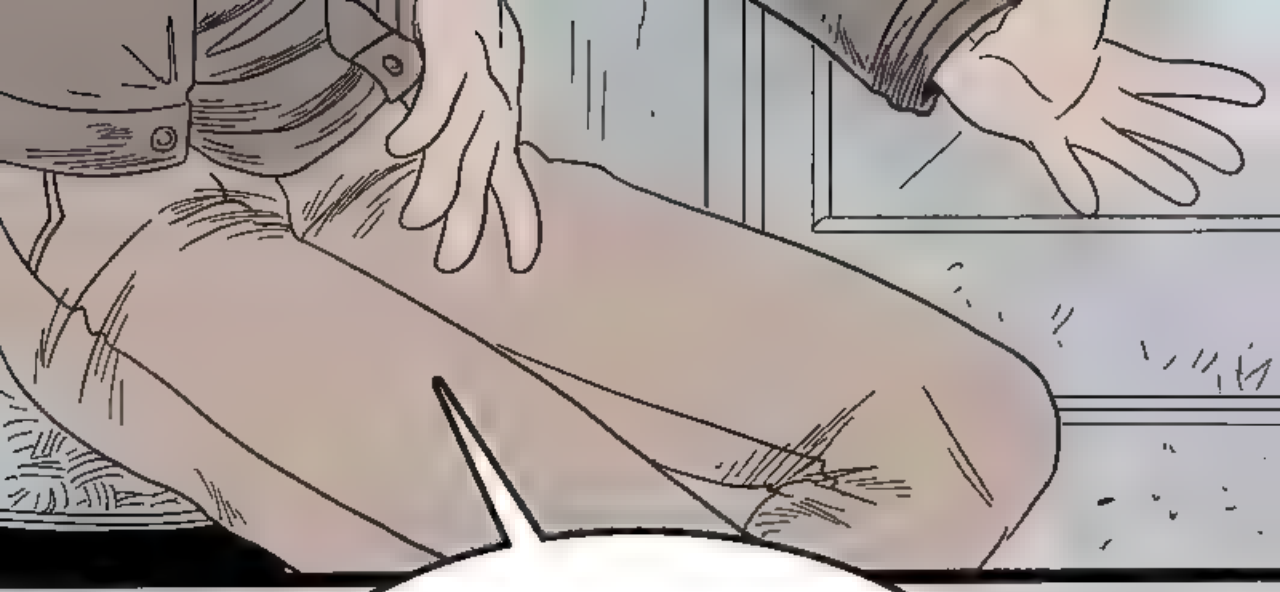

WHY AREN'T YOU TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY??
YOU DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO WEAR A DISGUISE OUT, JEREMY.
THERE'S NO

POINT NOW.
IT WAS YOUR IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WELL, I HATE THAT STUPID CAT EAR HOODIE.

RRRGHH!

I HATE THIS! CAN'T WE JUST WALK OUT?
GET SOME BACKPACKS AND JUST... WALK OUT THROUGH THE WOODS!

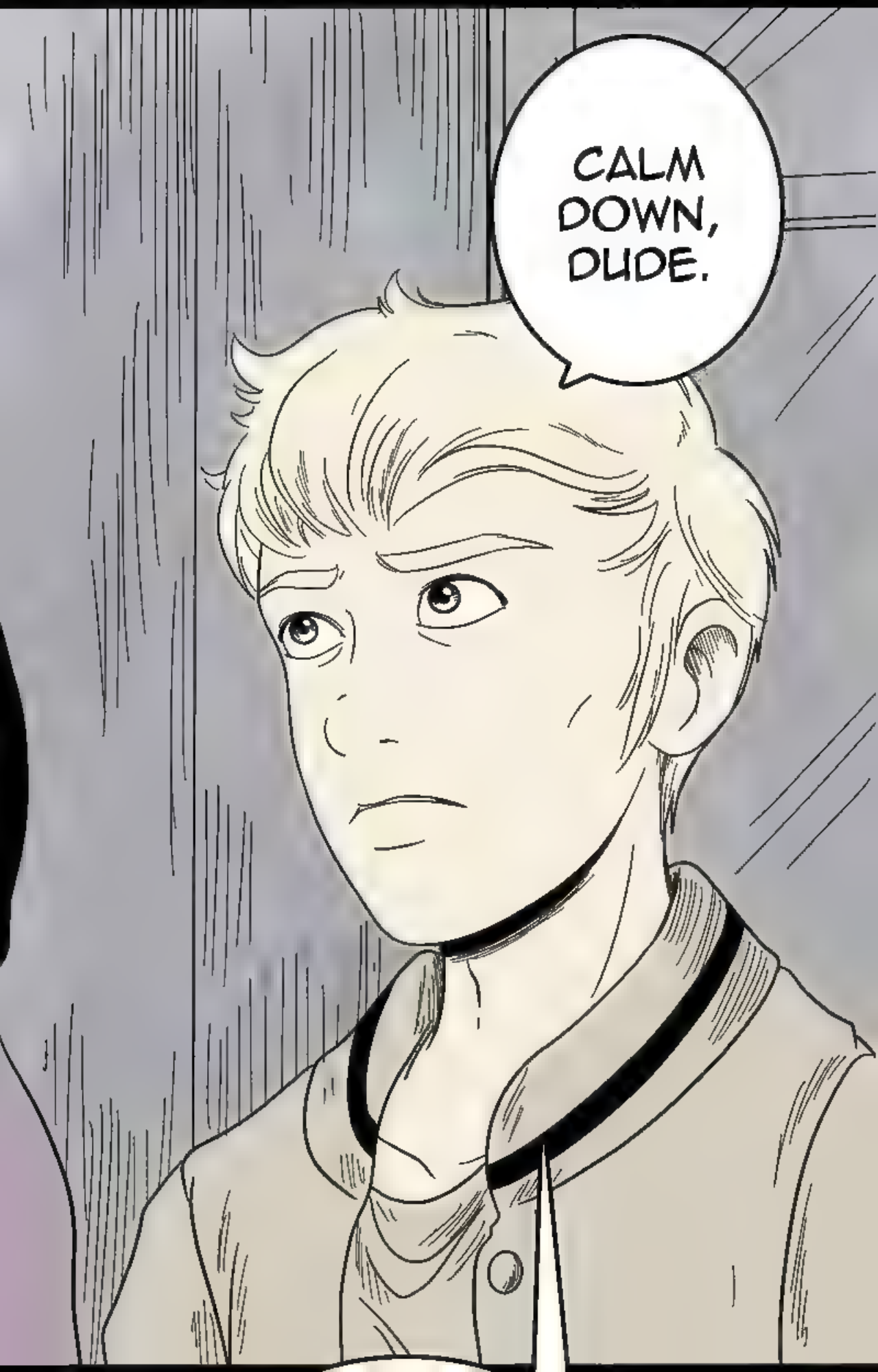


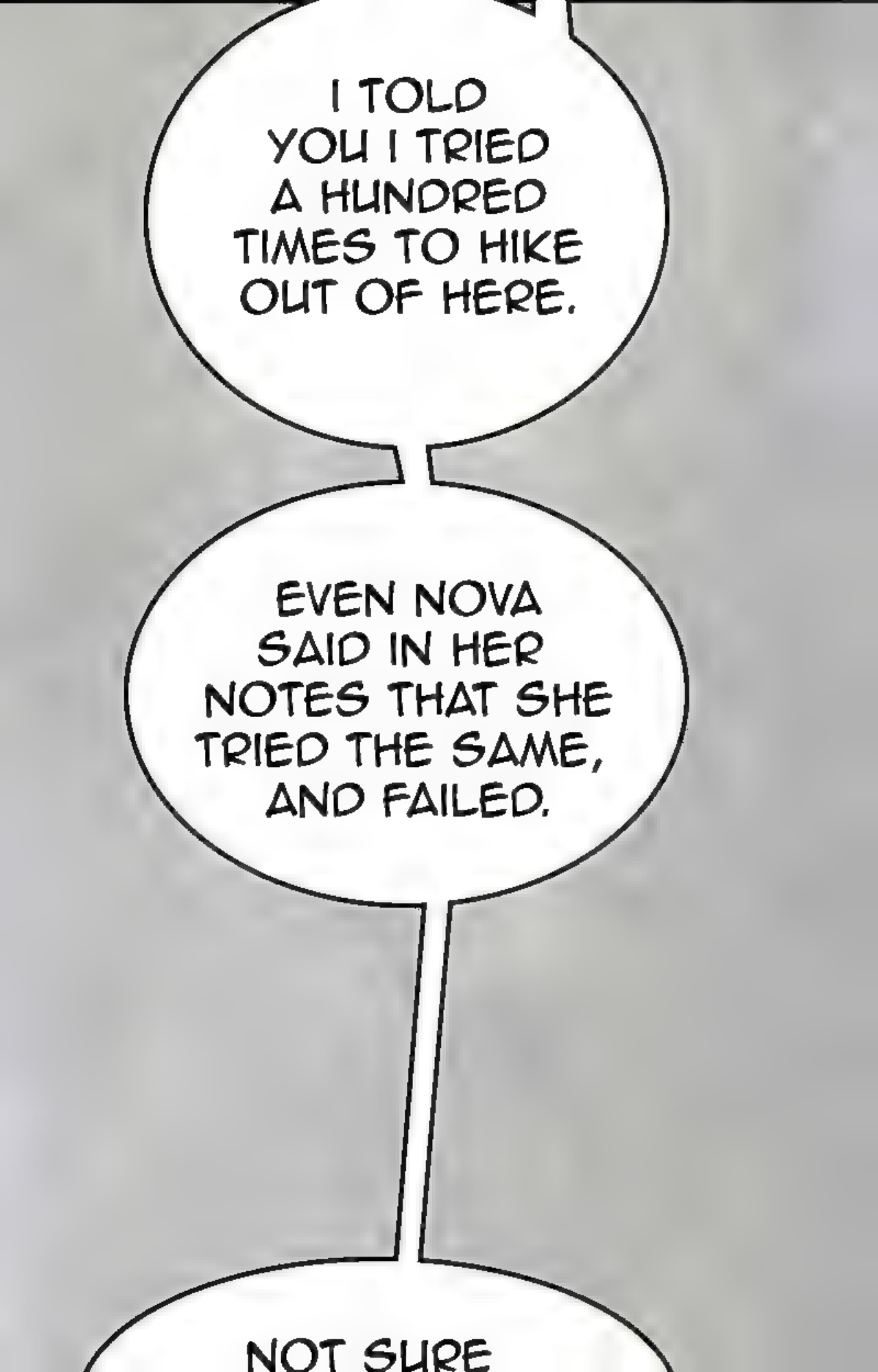
WHO'S GONNA STOP US?

I'LL BRING MY BAT AND WRECK THE FIRST PERSON WHO TRIES!

AND THE SECOND, AND

THE THIRD, UNTIL WE'RE IN THE NEXT COUNTY!


CALM DOWN, DUDE.


I TOLD YOU I TRIED A HUNDRED TIMES TO HIKE OUT OF HERE.
EVEN NOVA SAID IN HER NOTES THAT SHE TRIED THE SAME, AND FAILED.
NOT SURE

WHAT HAPPENED TO HER, BUT...

WHEN I TRIED, I'D GET A LITTLE WAYS INTO THE FOREST, ONLY TO GET TURNED AROUND, OVER AND OVER.

I HAD A COMPASS AND ALL THAT, BUT THE TRAILS SEEMED TO JUST GO IN CIRCLES.

WORST OF ALL...

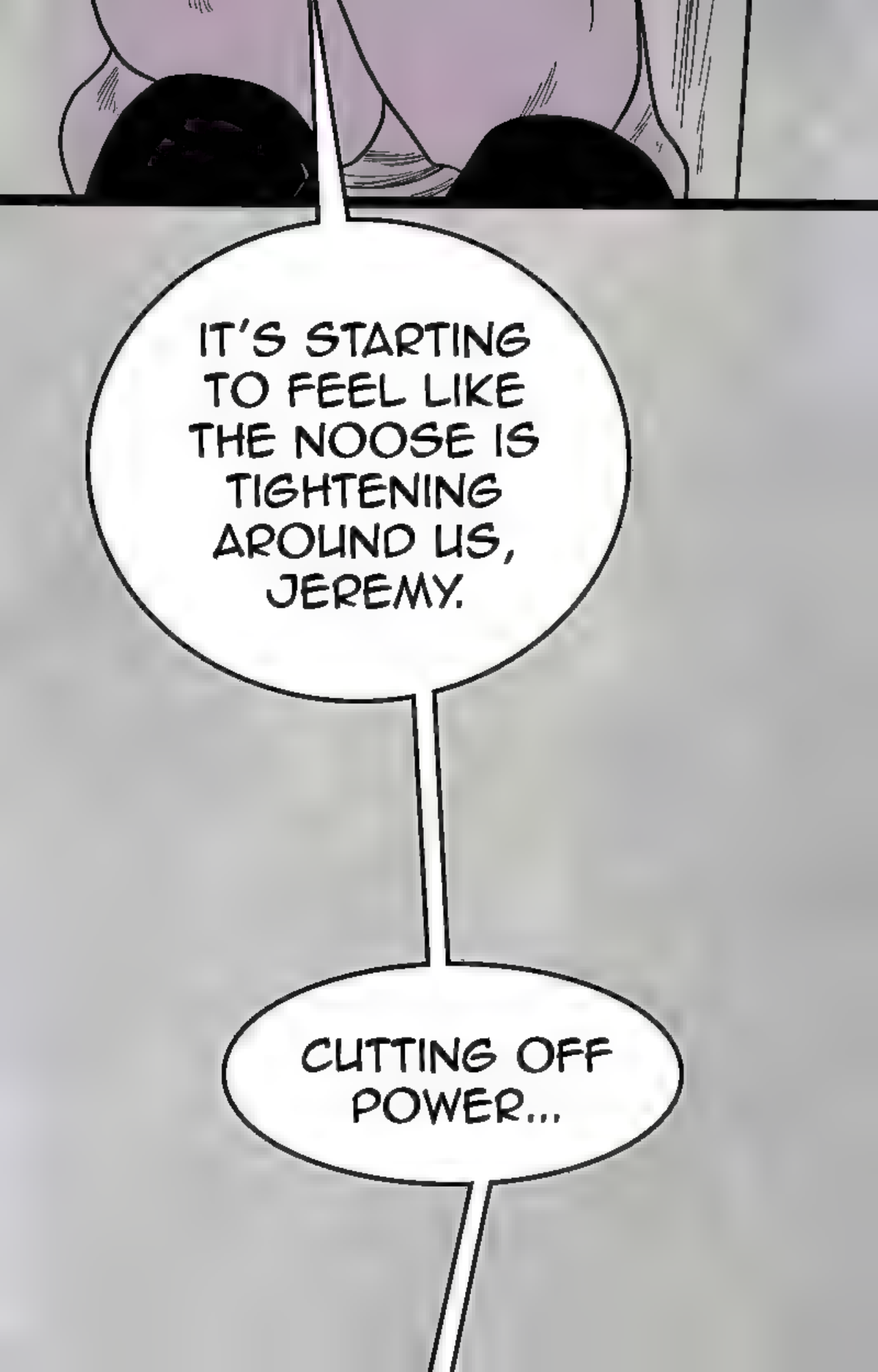
I ALWAYS FELT LIKE I WAS BEING FOLLOWED BY SOMETHING.

SOMETHING ***BIG***, THAT GOT CLOSER AS I GOT FURTHER FROM TOWN.

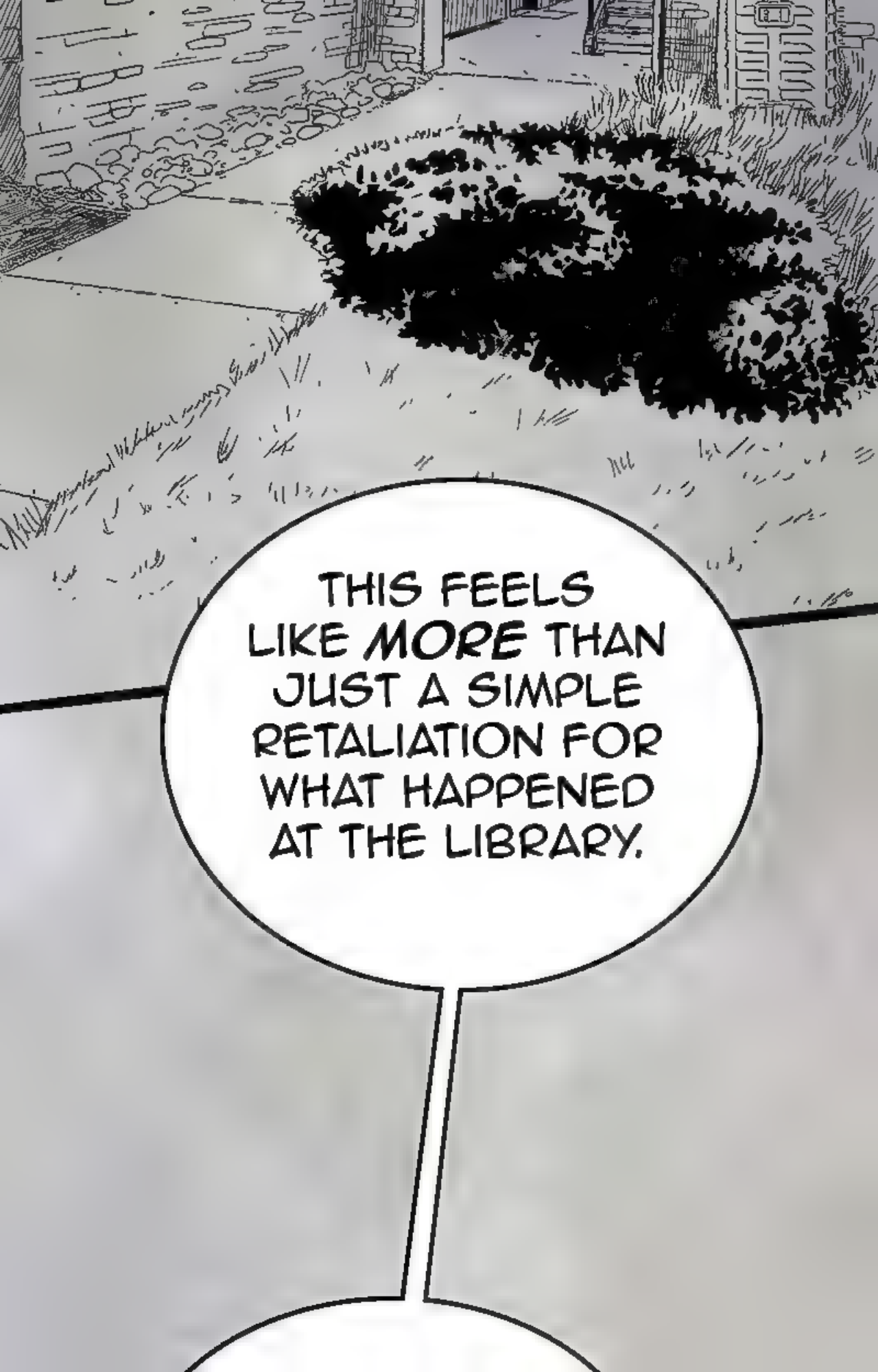
IT'S SUICIDE TO TRY WANDERING AROUND IN THE WOODS AGAIN.

WE'RE SAFER
HERE.

ARE WE?


IT'S STARTING TO FEEL LIKE THE NOOSE IS TIGHTENING AROUND US, JEREMY.
CUTTING OFF POWER...

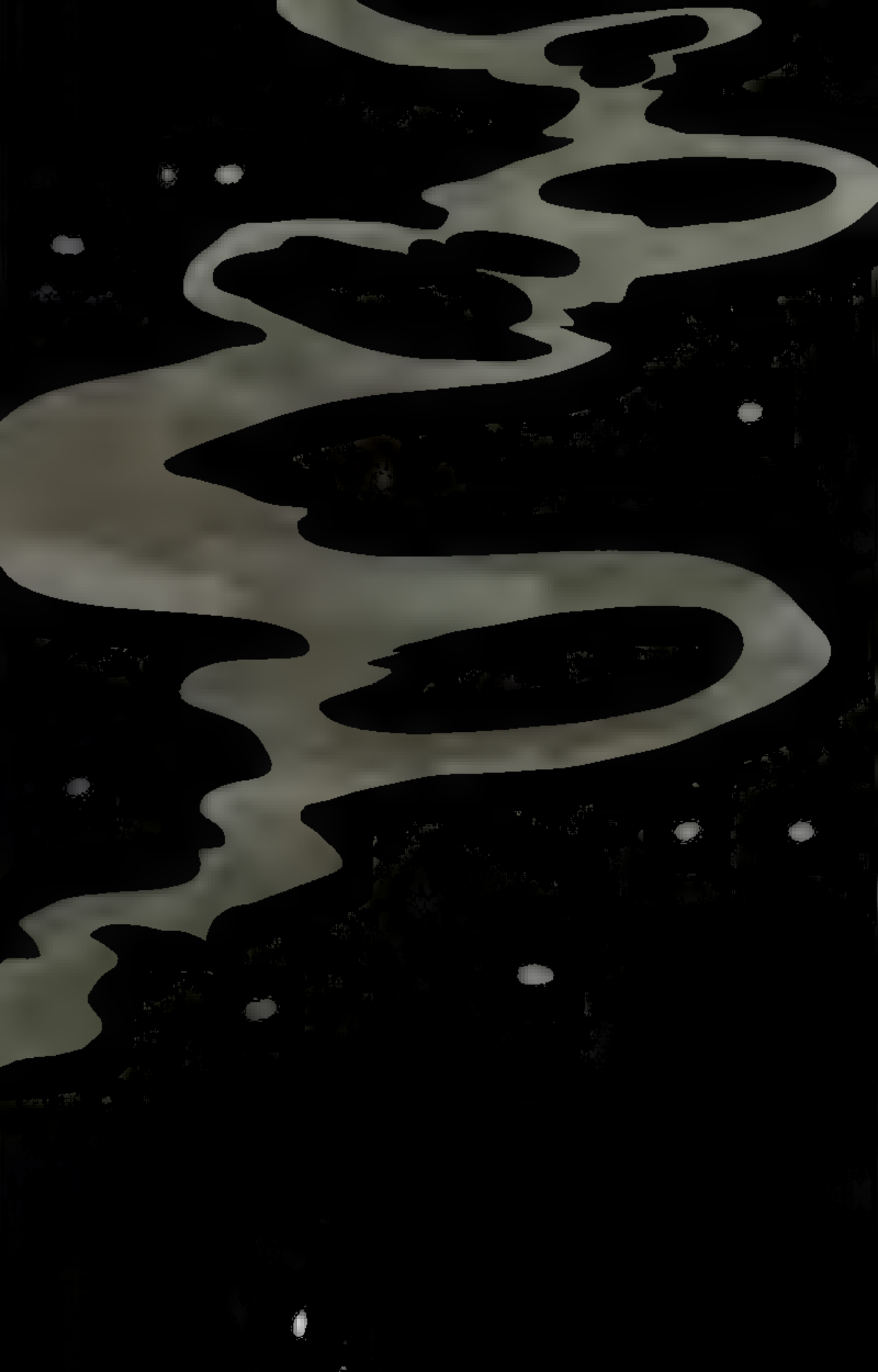
CUTTING OFF COMMUNICATION...


THIS FEELS LIKE MORE THAN JUST A SIMPLE RETALIATION FOR WHAT HAPPENED AT THE LIBRARY.

IT FEELS...
LIKE IT'S TIRED
OF WAITING FOR
US TO COME
TO IT.

I'M AFRAID THAT IT MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN ITS STRENGTH BACK...

AND NOW
IT'S DONE
PLAYING
GAMES
WITH US.

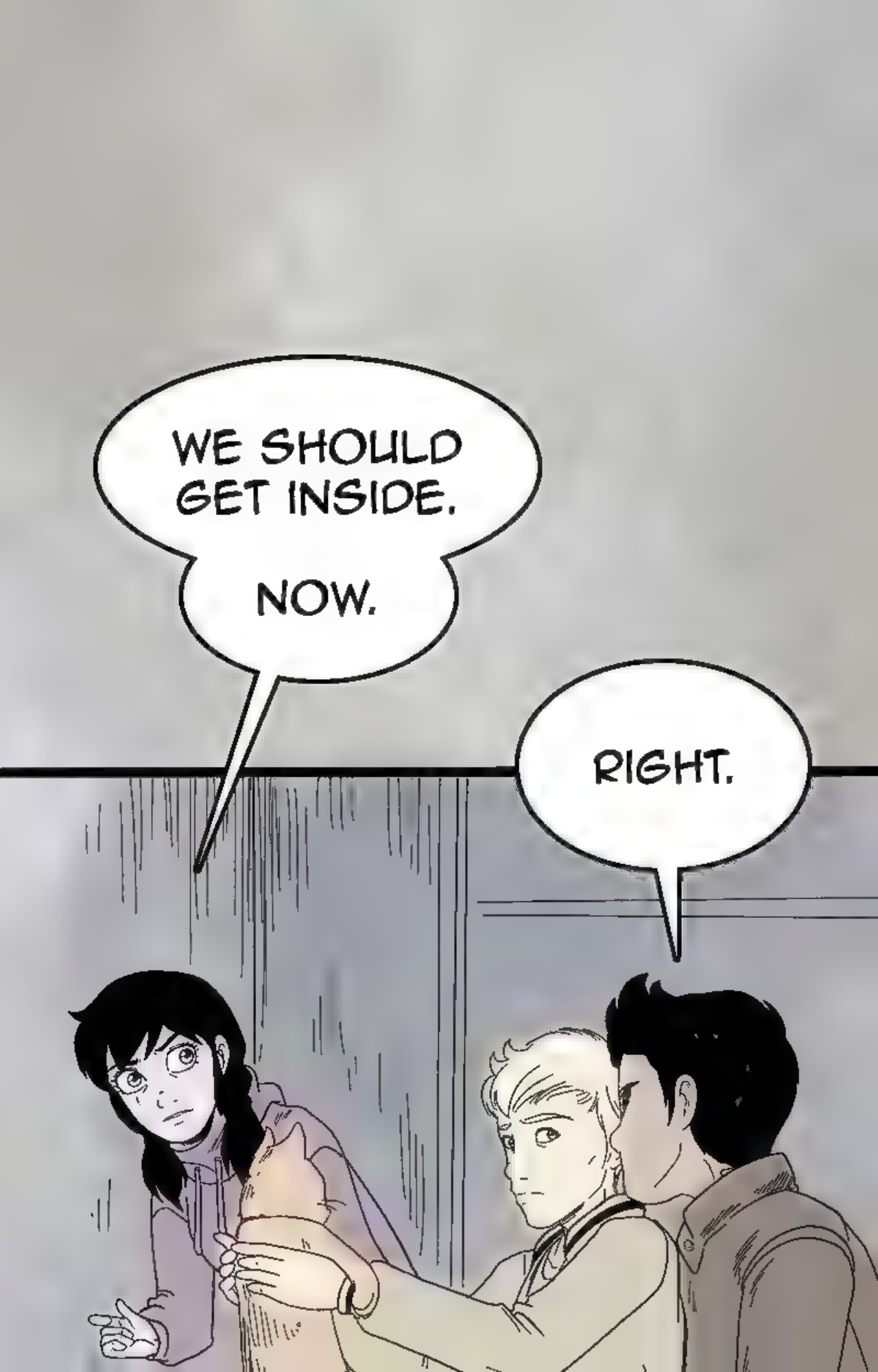


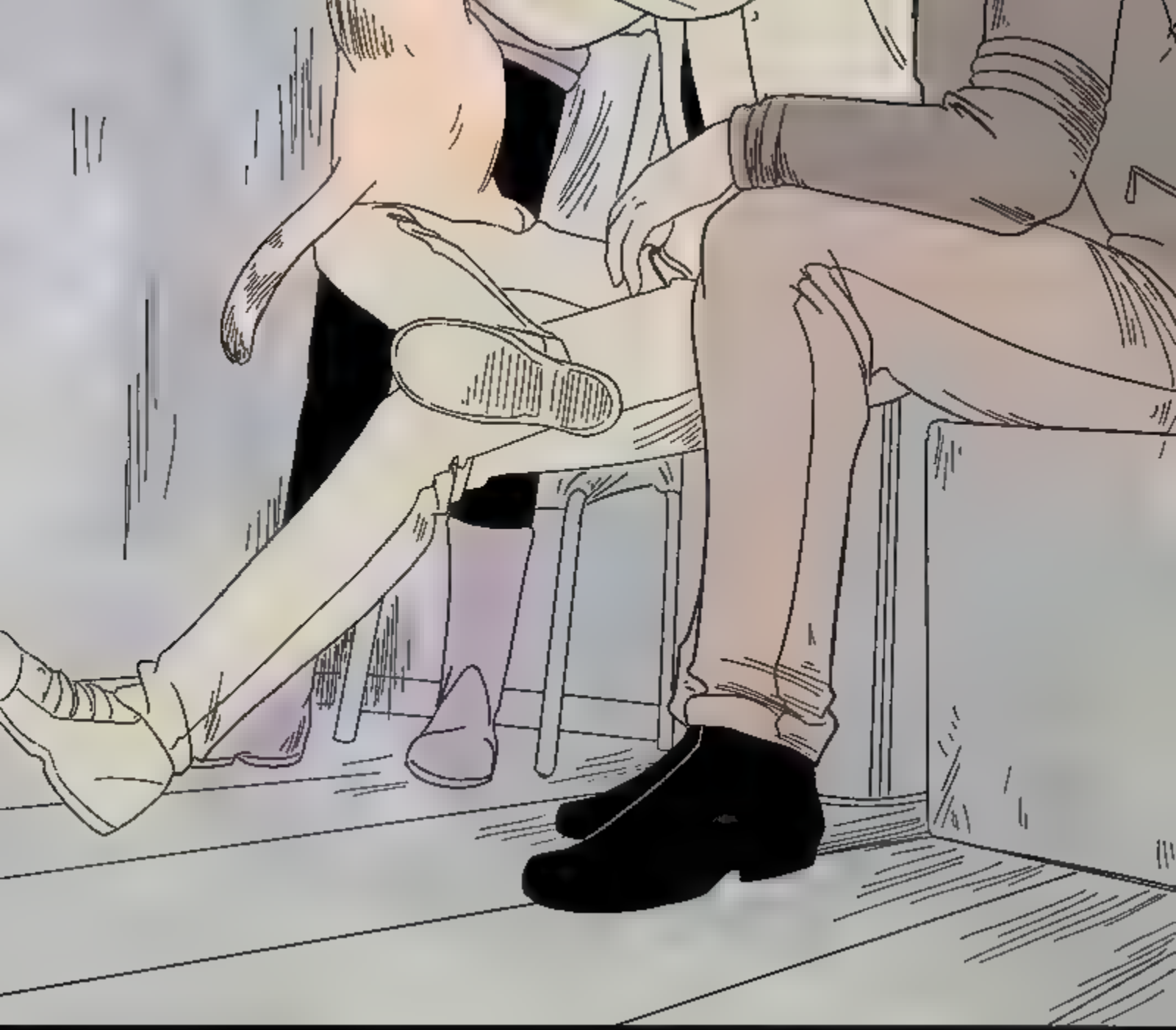
GROOOWL

LITTLES?
YOU OKAY?

GROWL
WHAT'S THE MATTER, FLUFF?

YOU SMELL SOMETHING WEIRD?

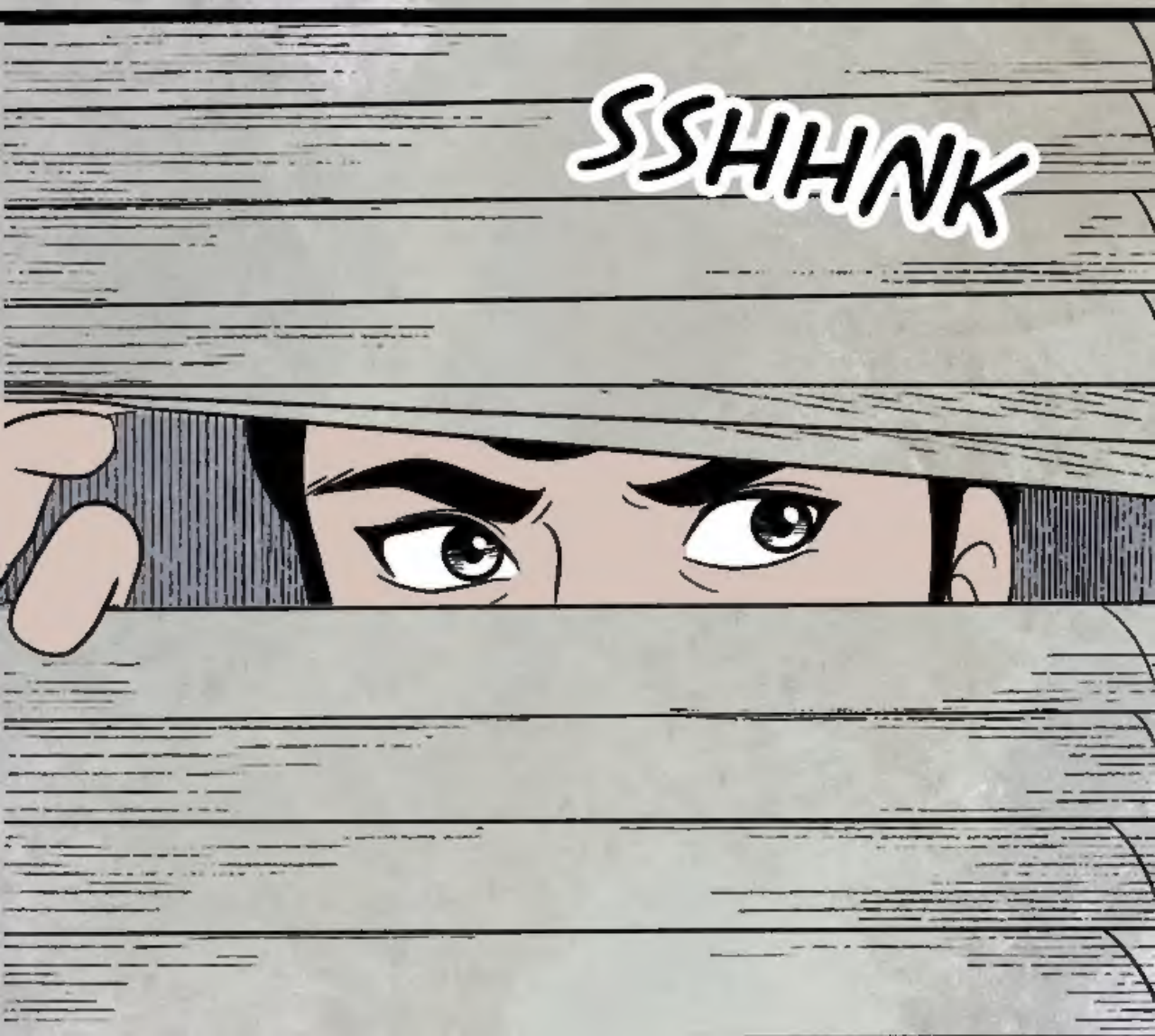

WE SHOULD GET INSIDE.
NOW.
RIGHT.



COME ON,
LITTLES...

CREAAAK
SLAM

SLAM


SSHHNK